THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI): (a) to (d) The press report published in the Indian Express of 11th April, 1992 as also its base report in the Economic Times of 23rd March, 1992 has attracted the attention of the Government. These reports are factually incorrect and are based on erroneous appreciation of the technical specifications laid down in consultation with the State Governments for the procurement of paddy and wheat.

Moisture permitted to an extent of 18% in case of paddy and 14% in case of wheat can in no way be considered to be an impurity in the stocks as it being an essential component of any living organism including foodgrains. Similarly the varietal admixture/admixture of other foodgrains permitted in paddy and wheat to an extent of 10% and 6% respectively can hardly be considered as serious defect as such an admixture is in no way deficient in food value but is also inevitable under the existing agricultural practices in our country. The same applies to slightly damaged grains permitted up to 10% in wheat as the BIS definition for it stipulates—"kernels or pieces of kernels that are damaged or discoloured superficially so as not to affect the quality of the material."

If these items are taken out, the permitted refraction for paddy is only 8% (foreign matter 2%, damaged/discoloured/sprouted/weevilled grains 3% & immature/shrunken/shrivelled grains 3%) and in case of wheat it is only 15.75% (foreign matter 0.75%, damaged grains 3% and shrivelled and brokens 12%).

While brokens carry the same food value as that of the whole grain, immature, shrivelled and shrunken grains are related to the agro-climatic conditions and can not be manipulated. Considering the agricultural practices and agro-climatic conditions in our country the limits for various refractions permitted in the specifications are reasonable.

Only such foodgrains which are fit for human consumption and conform to Prevention of Food Adultration Act standards are issued by the FCI to state Governments or their agencies for distribution through PDS.

As per the standing instructions all the procuring agencies have to ensure that all foodgrains procurement conform to the prescribed specifications.

Dehoarding operations launched by Delhi Administration

1406. DR. SANJAYA SINH: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state;

(a) whether the de-hoarding operation launched by the Delhi Administration since January 24-25, 1992 is still continuing;

(b) if so, the quantity of food items de-hoarded so far alongwith their value; and

(c) the number of cases filed so far against the alleged hoarders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI): (a) The checkings of licences under various Control Orders issued by the Food and Supplies Department of Delhi Administration is a continuing and normal activity. A number of surprise checkings/raids are conducted on the basis of intelligence gathered by the Department and complaints received from the public.

(b) 3,40,177 quintals of food items have been dehoarded so far, the value of which is over Rs. 54 crores.

(c) 9 cases have been filed so far against the hoarders.

Central Warehousing Corporation

1407. SHRI ANAND PRAKASH GAUTAM: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Warehousing capacity and business of the Central Warehousing Corporation, between

1990 and 1992 has been reduced from 88 per cent to 65 per cent, if so, what are the reasons therefor ;

(b) what steps are being taken by Government to step up its business ; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken against the officers who are responsible for the decline in business ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI) : (a) The average capacity utilisation of Central Warehousing Corporation during 1990-91 was about 78 per cent and during the first eleven months of 1991-92, it was about 74 per cent. This reduction in average capacity utilisation was mainly due to the decline in receipts of bonded cargo in Warehouses, lesser food-grains storage due to lower procurement, lesser availability of Jute and Fertiliser stocks for storage etc.

(b) The Corporation has taken steps to diversity its business into newer areas. It has started providing storage facilities for Tendu Pattas in Madhya Pradesh and it has also been appointed as an agent of the Food Corporation of India for procurement of foodgrains in places where it has adequate storage facilities. The Corporation is also planning to have long term arrangements with certain Public and Private Sector Undertakings for storage of their products. Fertiliser companies and other Public Sector companies are also being approached for increased storage of their commodities in the warehouses of the Corporation.

(c) In view of replies given to parts (a) and (b), no action is contemplated against any officer.

Stitching of bags for wheat and rice

1408. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to machine stitch 100 per cent bags for packing of wheat and rice;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) what is the incentive for machine stitching of wheat bags for this year and the estimated number of bags which could be machine stitched with this incentive ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI) : (a) and (b) In view of the vast magnitude of price support operation, involving about 8000 purchase centres (run by FCI and State Procuring Agencies) for procurement of wheat, and 18768 rice mills (as on 1-1-1986) from whom levy rice is collected and also in view of practical difficulties, it is not possible to ensure 100% machine stitching of foodgrain bags in one go. However, attempts are being made to persuade the rice millers to deliver levy rice to FCI in double line machine stitched B-Twill gunny bags.

(c) The maximum ceiling rate to be given as an incentive for double line machine stitching of wheat bags has been raised from 70 paise per bag to 95 paise per bag with effect from 1-4-1992. It is not possible to estimate the number of bags which would be machine stitched with this incentive.

Food Corporation of India

1409. SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) what was the annual turnover if the Food Corporation of India during the last three years, yearwise ;

(b) what was the annual profit or loss to the Corporation zone-wise, and what are the details of the transit and store losses during the above period ;

(c) whether it is a fact that thousands of tonnes of foodgrains is stolen by the transporters in connivance with the officer during transit from the railway stations to the warehouses at Patna, Purnea and Ranchi ;

(d) what are the details of transport contractors of the Patna region working with the Corporation ; and